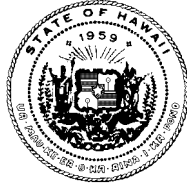


DAVID Y. IGE
GOVERNOR



PANKAJ BHANOT
DIRECTOR

CATHY BETTS
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
P. O. Box 339
Honolulu, Hawaii 96809-0339

TO: The Honorable Senator Josh Green, Chair
Senate Committee on Human Services

FROM: Pankaj Bhanot, Director

SUBJECT: SB 2276 Relating to Child Welfare Services

Hearing: Friday, January 26, 2018, 2:45 p.m.
Conference Room 016, State Capitol

DEPARTMENT'S POSITION: The Department of Human Services (DHS) appreciates the intent of this bill and offers the following comments.

PURPOSE: The purpose of the bill is to appropriate funds to establish a five-year program in the East Hawaii, Child Welfare Services (CWS) Section, in Hawaii County that limits the number of children per child welfare services caseworker to no more than twenty and funds additional case managers and support staff positions.

The notion of a five year pilot program is intriguing as DHS continues to examine ways to improve our services and response to families in crisis. DHS acknowledges an increase in children in foster care; the total number of children in foster care statewide has increased 23% from State Fiscal Year (SFY) 2014 to SFY 2017. The highest increase has been in the East Hawaii section, where we have seen a 56% increase of children in foster care over that same period. Preliminary data indicate parental substance abuse as the precipitating factor, resulting in these increased Child Welfare Services cases in East Hawaii. Fortunately, CWS - East Hawaii has experienced a low vacancy rate (currently, all caseworker positions are filled in East Hawaii) and maintains a relatively stable workforce.

In SFY 2016, the confirmation rate for child abuse and/or neglect allegations in East Hawaii was the same as the statewide confirmation rate of 40%. Based on November 2017

data, the average caseload per worker in East Hawaii was slightly lower (25 cases) than the average caseload statewide (26 cases). The Department agrees that support is needed to reduce caseloads and increase the Child Welfare workforce, however, that need is not greater in East Hawaii than in other areas of the State.

As is well established, poverty, child abuse and neglect, and family violence, are results of complex social, economic and environmental factors, and we welcome the legislature's partnership to improve the child protective response system on the Big Island and throughout the state. However, in considering the suggested cap to worker caseloads, in addition to investment in child welfare services, any pilot must include equal or greater emphasis and investment to support and improve capacity of prevention and other services that strengthen families by addressing protective factors that when present in the home, reduce the risk and incident of abuse and neglect in the first place.

In 2017, DHS and Social Services Division (SSD) leadership have taken a number of steps to examine and address the needs of SSD and Branch staff. DHS Director and SSD Administrators visited offices throughout the state and met with staff to share the vision and opportunities for change and improvement. DHS and SSD leadership listened to the voices of our staff to hear their concerns, needs, and ideas for solutions.

DHS initiated a number of efforts to transform the way we do this most sensitive work. Structurally, to improve case practices, SSD separated policy from operations allowing Child Welfare Services Branch (CWSB) to focus on improving its case practice while the Division will provide the support services (training, policy clarification, collaborative efforts with other DHS divisions and external partners). In 2017 the legislature supported this change and transferred 10 positions from CWSB to the Division to provide these support services to staff that provide direct services to children and families.

SSD is also engaged in the development of its IT application to the DHS Integrated Enterprise System. Once the IT platform is fully developed, departmental service and data integration will improve access by SSD to relevant information of the Med-Quest and Benefit, Employment, Support Services Divisions. Eventually, it is envisioned that external state and non-profit partners may also be linked. The investment in our technology systems to share data and streamline processes, improves access to services and information by clients and

staff, improves efficiency and response time, and will support staff morale and mobilize our workforce.

‘Ohana Nui, the DHS multigenerational framework to end poverty, is a transformative challenge to provide integrated and comprehensive services to families to end the cycle of poverty, abuse, and neglect. Commenced in 2016, ‘Ohana Nui is already yielding promising collaborations between divisions, public and private agencies that provide critical services to vulnerable populations, as we strengthen families and sustain positive change. Hawaii County has invested in a web-based resource that puts community resources at the fingertips of service providers, and DHS Division of Vocational Rehabilitation and SSD's Adult Protective Community Services Branch have become high users and appreciate the community's ability to collaborate. Further, an ongoing pilot of DHS and the Department of Health is currently underway to build a more robust state home visiting program, recognizing the importance of prevention and intervention without duplicating services.

DHS also restarted its collaboration with the University of Hawaii to build workforce capacity and support our staff's professional development. The Hawaii Child Welfare Education Collaboration (HCWEC) with the University of Hawaii, School of Social Work, is a valuable staffing resource, graduating masters of social work scholars every year. The first graduating class prepared eight scholars in 2017. These graduates became social workers placed within vacancies on O‘ahu, West Hawai‘i, and Kaua‘i. We anticipate another eight scholars entering the CWSB workforce in June 2018. With limited state funding, CWSB will continue this capacity building program, which is currently eligible for federal reimbursement funds.

CWSB is also in the process of a reorganization and is examining ways to maximize vacant positions by moving positions within the Branch. Workload and staffing patterns are being analyzed to make the most prudent decisions with existing staffing resources.

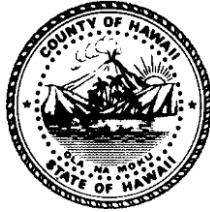
Staff retention is a critical factor in addressing the vacant positions. In the past four years, CWSB has invested efforts to strengthen the leadership team. The Branch developed supervisor training curriculum, tested, and modified it with input from CWS supervisors. The first cohort is currently participating in the nine-session training program with an additional coaching support.

With the support of Casey Family Programs, the CWSB executive leadership has been participating in a leadership strengthening program. CWSB has quarterly statewide supervisor training and management leadership team meetings to provide peer support, conduct problem-solving discussions, and discuss opportunities for targeted in-service training.

CWSB staff consistently report that insufficient resources and prevention programs are needed to better serve families. Early childhood and early learning opportunities for children and parents, residential substance abuse programs that allow children to be placed with parents, resources to address economic and health issues, limited transportation resources, and an aging state vehicle fleet are examples of needs identified by staff. To address one of these needs, in SFY 2018, CWSB is identifying funding to purchase new vehicles for three of the Sections without motor pool services.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this bill.

Harry Kim
Mayor



Wil Okabe
Managing Director

Barbara J. Kossow
Deputy Managing Director

County of Hawai'i Office of the Mayor

25 Apuni Street, Suite 2603 • Hilo, Hawai'i 96720 • (808) 961-8211 • Fax (808) 961-6553
KONA: 74-5044 Ane Keohokālole Hwy., Bldg C • Kailua-Kona, Hawai'i 96740
(808) 323-4444 • Fax (808) 323-4440

January 24, 2018

Senator Josh Green
Hawai'i State Capitol, Room 407
Hawai'i State Capitol
Honolulu, HI 96813

Dear Chair Green and Committee members:

RE: SB 2276 – Relating to Child Welfare Services
Hearing date: 01-26-18; 2:45 pm – Conference Room 016

Thank you for this opportunity to testify in support of SB2276.

My staff and I have been made aware of the critical need to improve child welfare services in Hawai'i County. While both your East and West Hawai'i offices are suffering from a shortage of manpower, the initiative proposed in SB 2276 recognizes the reality that it is in East Hawai'i where the State has the best chance to hire and retain the necessary personnel.

If the numbers I have seen are accurate, the child welfare caseload in East Hawai'i is shocking and disturbing. Child welfare workers have so many clients that it would be considered unacceptable by national standards, and the caseload is even out of line compared to other counties in Hawai'i. Add to that the handicap of being asked to cover a huge geographic area, requiring a great deal of time-consuming travel, and it is no wonder that the community is begging for your assistance.

I am not sure why the positions and funding requested in SB 2276 should be considered a "pilot project," but if that is determined to be the best way to give some relief to the East Hawai'i workers and the keiki they serve, then I defer to your wisdom on that matter. My main concern is that the workers and their clients get the relief called for, and the sooner the better.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Wil Okabe
Managing Director

SB-2276

Submitted on: 1/25/2018 2:39:43 PM

Testimony for HMS on 1/26/2018 2:45:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Melodie Aduja	OCC Legislative Priorities	Support	No

Comments:

**PRESENTATION OF THE
OAHU COUNTY COMMITTEE ON LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES
DEMOCRATIC PARTY OF HAWAII
TO THE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES
OF THE STATE SENATE
TWENTY-NINTH LEGISLATURE
REGULAR SESSION OF 2018**

Friday, January 26, 2018

2:45 p.m.

Hawaii State Capitol, Conference Room 16

RE: Testimony in Support of SB 2276, RELATING TO CHILD WELFARE SERVICES

To the Honorable Josh Green, Chair; the Honorable Stanley Chang, Vice-Chair and Members of the Committee on Human Services:

Good afternoon, my name is Melodie Aduja. I serve as Chair of the Oahu County Committee ("OCC") Legislative Priorities Committee of the Democratic Party of Hawaii. Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony on Senate Bill No. 2276, relating to Child Welfare Services. The OCC Legislative Priorities Committee is in favor of Senate Bill No. 2276 and support its passage.

Senate Bill No. 2276, is in accord with the Platform of the Democratic Party of Hawai'i ("DPH"), 2016, as it appropriates funds for DHS to establish a five-year pilot program in the east Hawaii child welfare services section in Hawaii

county. Specifically, the DPH Platform states, “We believe that all families should have an equal opportunity to build their assets and become self-sufficient; and we support a strong safety net of programs that will afford them the opportunity to do so. We must protect our children our future, from violence and neglect and provide them with a safe and healthy environment in which to grow and thrive. We support initiatives that enhance access and equity in education, employment, and business opportunities intended to lift family and individuals out of poverty and remove existing barriers to equal opportunity in our communities.” (Platform of the DPH, Lines 184-191 (2016)).

Given that Senate Bill No. 2276 appropriates funds to establish a five-year pilot program for the east Hawaii child welfare services, a program designed to help protect these children from violence and neglect and provide them with a safe and healthy environment in which to grow and thrive, it is the position of the OCC Legislative Committee to support this measure.

Thank you very much for your kind consideration.

Sincerely yours,

/s/ Melodie Aduja

Melodie Aduja, Chair, OCC Legislative Priorities Committee

Email: legislativepriorities@gmail.com, Tel.: (808) 258-8889

SB-2276

Submitted on: 1/24/2018 12:26:29 AM

Testimony for HMS on 1/26/2018 2:45:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Karen Kalani-Pacheco		Support	No

Comments:

Aloha mai kakou,

My name is Karen Kalani-Pacheco and I am writing in support for SB2276. Thank you.

SB-2276

Submitted on: 1/24/2018 8:29:14 AM

Testimony for HMS on 1/26/2018 2:45:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Joy Hohnstine		Support	No

Comments:

I support the pilot project to cap the number of children supervised by each caseworker to ensure the best possible care for the children of Hawai'i. Thank you for your time and consideration.

SB-2276

Submitted on: 1/24/2018 10:01:24 AM

Testimony for HMS on 1/26/2018 2:45:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Ashlynn		Support	No

Comments:

SB-2276

Submitted on: 1/24/2018 1:33:04 PM

Testimony for HMS on 1/26/2018 2:45:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Joey Rogers		Support	No

Comments:

Aloha,

I am a resource caregiver in East Hawaii. I support this bill because I have seen first hand that case workers right now have way to many children in their case load. It is dangerous to the children they are responsible for. Please do the right thing and pass this bill into law.

Thank you,

Joey Rogers

SB-2276

Submitted on: 1/24/2018 1:33:42 PM

Testimony for HMS on 1/26/2018 2:45:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Elizabeth Gagner		Support	No

Comments:

My daughter and husband have foster children and have adopted several. They also run a church mission to support foster and adoptive families. The caseworkers have not had time to support her often because of lack of resources ie unable to schedule meetings, even answering the telephone and/or returning calls !

Please adopt this bill to provide support to our children in need.

Mahalo,

Elizabeth Gagner

Laupahoehoe, Hawaii

SB-2276

Submitted on: 1/24/2018 9:45:02 PM

Testimony for HMS on 1/26/2018 2:45:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Sherrie Galdeira		Support	No

Comments:

Sherrie Galdeira

Hawaii County Resident

January 24, 2018

Re: Support for our child welfare system

To Whom It May Concern:

This letter is to express our strong support for Senate Bill 2276. We ask that our senators and representatives do what is necessary to protect the health and safety of our most vulnerable children in Hawaii.

We respectfully request that you mandate a cap of 20 children per Child Welfare Services caseworker in East Hawaii for five years as a pilot project to demonstrate that lower caseloads results in better outcomes for our children, and less abuse and neglect.

As youth in foster care are the most vulnerable to needing guidance throughout their lives, it is important for CWS to be properly staffed to be able to assist these youth, birth families and resource caregivers in a fashion that will allow for timely and quality support.

Please do what is necessary to help our CWS workers be supported in a way that will bring us closer to national standards for child welfare workers. Please help these CWS workers and their assistants to do their jobs in a caring and reasonable fashion, with support and regulation.

We look forward to continuing our collaborative work.

Best wishes!

Sincerely,

Sherrie Galdeira

SB-2276

Submitted on: 1/24/2018 8:21:31 PM

Testimony for HMS on 1/26/2018 2:45:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Michele Carvalho	1966	Support	No

Comments:

Dear Legislatures:

This letter is in strong support for Bill #2276. I want to make it known that I am in full favor of the purposes of this Act.

As youth in foster care are the most vulnerable to needing guidance throughout their lives, it is important for CWS to be properly staffed to be able to assist these youth, birth families and resource caregivers in a fashion that will allow for timely and quality support.

Please do what it takes to help our CWS workers be supported in a way that the national standards emphasize these CWS workers and their assistants to be able to do their jobs in a caring and reasonable fashion, with support and regulation.

I have been a resource caregiver with the DHS Child Welfare since changes, some positive, some not so positive. If Child Welfare is removing children to put them in safe nurturing environments, then the state has an obligation to make sure their placements are safe and nurturing. If caseworkers are unable to do their monthly visits with all of the children in their cases due to the overwhelming size of their caseloads, then how can the state assure that the homes our children are in are safe? Hawaii Island has the highest rate of abused or neglected children in the state, per 100,000 residents, nearly triple the rate on Oahu! Our caseworkers in East Hawaii are burdened with caseloads well above the national recommendation, carrying cases that involve 40-50 children. We have a moral obligation to our children! I see an urgent need to act.

I look forward to continuing our collaborative work.

Sincerely,

Michele A Carvalho

From: [claudiale085](#)
To: [HMS Testimony](#)
Subject: Testimony from Claudia Lee
Date: Thursday, January 25, 2018 8:51:22 AM

Hello my name is Claudia Lee and I would like to submit a testimony on behalf of the Foster care/ licensing caseload cap of no more than 20 cases per worker.(sb2276)

I was a social worker with child protective services for approximately 4 years around 1988-1992. It was my first position as a social worker therefore I was so eager and willing to do whatever was necessary to do an effective job that I was working often 12 hour days and weekends or late into the night. During emergencies I would do suicide assessments, I would remove children from Foster Homes where there was alleged abuse I would take children to the emergency room and find another placement in the middle of the night, I would do crisis interventions when a foster parent wanted a difficult child removed from their home in order to prevent removal, I would meet with children who were removed from their homes who were having a difficult time adjusting at all hours. These things often did not occur within my 7:45-4:30 shift.

I remember one late night when I had gotten a call from a foster parent that two of her teenagers had gotten into a fight and my foster child had run away from home at 11 at night. The foster parent wanted that child removed from the home. I knew where the child would run to, a park in Waianae so I drove out there and found her but I accompanied her to the foster home where I did a mediation between the foster parent and the other child that had a very good resolution and the child was able to remain in that home for the next 6 months.

The job of a foster care case manager is not a simple 40 hour a week job especially if you care for a child. Just because they have a therapist that they may meet once or twice a month doesn't mean they have a relationship with that therapist established yet. Just because they are in a foster home doesn't mean that that foster parent is equipped with dealing with a child's emotional issues, or that the child has a relationship yet with the foster parent. Well after 4 years I was burned out and had to change positions in the Child and Adolescent mental health division. When I look back on that now I was in my late 20s or early 30s and still single with no children or responsibilities. Had it been any later in life I would not have been able to make that sort of sacrifice and commitment to the children in need. At that time my caseload was about 25.

Thank you for your attention in this matter. I pray for all those who are providing services to our children in Hawaii and the children in the foster care system.

Aloha,
Claudia Lee

Sent from my T-Mobile 4G LTE Device

TO: Senator Josh Green, Chair
Senator Stanley Chang, Vice Chair
Committee on Human Services

HEARING: Friday, January 26, 2018
2:45 PM
Conference Room 016

FROM: Esther B. McDaniel

RE: SB2276 – Relating to Child Welfare Services

Dear Senators:

I support SB 2276.

I am a licensed resource caregiver (AKA foster parent) and very concerned about our keiki in foster care. I'm also concerned about our caseworkers who carry a huge responsibility in serving our most vulnerable children, serving us, the resource caregivers and serving birth families in trying to help them get healthy and reunified with their children.

Please give the support our social workers need in order to help and heal our children who are suffering the consequences of abuse and neglect. Large caseloads make it difficult for a caseworker to provide quality service. The Child Welfare League of America recommends that caseworkers carry 12 – 15 cases. This pilot program in East Hawaii would place a cap of 20 children per caseworker. It's a good start in enabling a caseworker to meet the individual and specialized needs of traumatized children and their families. According to the July 2016 Issue Brief of the Child Welfare Information Gateway it states that, "Manageable caseloads and workloads can make a real difference in a worker's ability to engage families, deliver quality services, stay with the agency and ultimately achieve positive outcomes for children and families."

Our keiki are precious and should be cherished. Those who carry the hurt and pain of abuse and neglect can have hope and healing. A good caseworker can be the key for a hurting child and their family in turning their lives around. I've seen this firsthand with children who came into my home through foster care and are now healthy, productive adults, many whose parents are doing well also. In one mom's case, at first she didn't like the social worker, but through referrals and timely case management mom completed all services to get her life in order and was reunified with her 5 children in less than a year.

Please invest in the lives of our keiki in foster care and help strengthen our families.

Thank you for your consideration and work on this issue.

Submitted with Much Aloha,

Esther B. McDaniel
Wahiawa, Hawaii

SB-2276

Submitted on: 1/25/2018 2:02:26 PM

Testimony for HMS on 1/26/2018 2:45:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Makana		Support	No

Comments:

To Whom It May Concern:

This letter is to express our strong support for Senate Bill 2276. We ask that our senators and representatives do what is necessary to protect the health and safety of our most vulnerable children in Hawaii.

We respectfully request that you mandate a cap of 20 children per Child Welfare Services caseworker in East Hawaii for five years as a pilot project to demonstrate that lower caseloads results in better outcomes for our children, and less abuse and neglect.

As youth in foster care are the most vulnerable to needing guidance throughout their lives, it is important for CWS to be properly staffed to be able to assist these youth, birth families and resource caregivers in a fashion that will allow for timely and quality support.

Please do what is necessary to help our CWS workers be supported in a way that will bring us closer to national standards for child welfare workers. Please help these CWS workers and their assistants to do their jobs in a caring and reasonable fashion, with support and regulation.

We look forward to continuing our collaborative work.

Best wishes!

Sincerely,

Makana

SB-2276

Submitted on: 1/25/2018 2:03:57 PM

Testimony for HMS on 1/26/2018 2:45:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Dawn Lee		Support	No

Comments:

I stand in strong support of Senate Bill 2276. We ask our Representatives and Senators to do what is needed to protect the health and safety of our most vulnerable children in Hawaii. Youth in foster care are the most vulnerable and if CWS remains understaffed, it remains a threat to the well being of all concerned. Diligent staff members have been over burdened with too many cases. We cannot let these children 'slip through the cracks' or be a number in a file. We are grossly far from national standards and this bill will help the children and raise the standards for them. Thank you. Sincerely, Dawn Lee

SB-2276

Submitted on: 1/25/2018 2:46:59 PM

Testimony for HMS on 1/26/2018 2:45:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Vanessa-Lee K. Kekahuna		Support	No

Comments:

Vanessa-Lee K. Kekahuna

99 Osorio Lane, Hilo, Hawaii 96720

Re: SB2772: Support for our child welfare system

To Whom It May Concern:

This letter is to express our strong support for Senate Bill 2276. We ask that our senators and representatives do what is necessary to protect the health and safety of our most vulnerable children in Hawaii.

We respectfully request that you mandate a cap of 20 children per Child Welfare Services caseworker in East Hawaii for five years as a pilot project to demonstrate that lower caseloads results in better outcomes for our children, and less abuse and neglect.

As youth in foster care are the most vulnerable to needing guidance throughout their lives, it is important for CWS to be properly staffed to be able to assist these youth, birth families and resource caregivers in a fashion that will allow for timely and quality support.

Please do what is necessary to help our CWS workers be supported in a way that will bring us closer to national standards for child welfare workers. Please help these CWS workers and their assistants to do their jobs in a caring and reasonable fashion, with support and regulation.

We look forward to continuing our collaborative work.

Best wishes!

Sincerely,

Vanessa-Lee K. Kekahuna

SB-2276

Submitted on: 1/25/2018 2:53:21 PM

Testimony for HMS on 1/26/2018 2:45:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Karilu Annes		Support	No

Comments:

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing this letter to express my strong support for Senate Bill 2276. I am writing this as someone who once worked for EHCWS, as a previous foster parent, and as a family member that was hurt by the current system. There have been many reports of wrong-doing by CWS workers, but I am here to state my observations. I have seen really good workers get drowned in notes, visits, reports, meetings, creating service plans, and whathaveyou trying to do their best to help families. All the while, having to fight with the parents, the foster parents, the grandparents, their supervisors, the attorneys, and even community service providers in order to get accurate information and just do the right thing for the children and families. The emails get backed up, the voicemail messages fill up, court reports are late.....the courts have fined some of the workers because their reports are late. People may think these are "just excuses" but it's a real thing...and the consequences are bigger then delayed funding or delayed paperwork...in this line of work, the consequences have led to death, permanent disability, continued abuse, and no trust for the system.

I humbly, yet firmly, ask for your support in passing this Senate Bill to give CWS staff more help, but even deeper, to help the children and families that are so profoundly affected by the involvement of CWS.

With utmost respect,

Karilu Annes

SB-2276

Submitted on: 1/25/2018 4:59:27 PM

Testimony for HMS on 1/26/2018 2:45:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Rhoda Ann K. Simeona		Support	No

Comments:

Support SB2276

Aloha,

This letter is to express our strong support for SB2276. I ask that our senators and representatives do what is necessary to protect the health and safety of our most vulnerable children of Hawaii.

Am respectfully request that you mandate a cap of 20 children per Child Welfare Services worker in East Hawaii for five years as a pilot project to demonstrate that lower caseloads results in better outcomes for our children, and less abuse and neglect. As youth in foster care are the most vulnerable to needing guidance throughout their lives, it is important for CWS to be properly staffed to be able to assist these youth, birth families and resource caregivers in a fashion that will allow for timely and quality support. Please do what is necessary to help our CWS workers be supported in a way that will bring us closer to national standards for child welfare workers. Please help these CWS workers and their assistants to do their jobs in a caring and reasonable fashion, with support and regulation.

Sincerely, Rhoda Ann K Simeona (very concerned community member of East Hawaii)

SB-2276

Submitted on: 1/25/2018 6:23:22 PM

Testimony for HMS on 1/26/2018 2:45:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Patrice Bell	Child Welfare Services	Support	No

Comments:

I have been working with CWS for 16 years. When Governor Lingle cut a whole unit, I immediatly began lobbying to bring the positions back. This was due to the fear I had on a daily basis. Worried that a child was going to fall through the cracks because one person can not supervise the amount of cases that we were supervising. This was in 2009. Here was are, 2018, still no new positions. Our population has grown, we have more responsibility that MANDATES us to do so much more (see everyone once a month, write letters to notify parties of hearings, ensure children know their rights, do numerous written assessments on an ongoing basis, write long reports, develop service plans, and so much more). It was wrong then to cut so many positions from an agency who's job is to protect children and ensure safety. I again ask, for the sake of our children and families, please give back the positions you took. My case load is too high and I need to be able to see every child at least once a month. Nelson Mandela said, "There can be no keener revelation of a society's soul than the way in which it treats its **children.**" We need help NOW!!

Patrice Bell. East Hawaii Child Welfare Social Worker

SB-2276

Submitted on: 1/25/2018 7:45:08 PM

Testimony for HMS on 1/26/2018 2:45:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
raymond gagner		Support	No

Comments:

I urge passage of sb2276. I know of four or five fostering families in my Church and community who receive no effective follow-up or support after a child is placed with them. Fortunately, these are all good parents and committed to providing a loving home for their foster children; but, if they were not, how would the State know and how could they intervene?

The East Hawaii foster care support staff is inadequate and the need grows greater month by month as more and more children are removed from homes due to the rampant drug abuse problem in East Hawaii.

Something must be done and sb2276 is a start.

Raymond Gagner

PO Box 49

Laupahoehoe, HI

SB-2276

Submitted on: 1/25/2018 9:45:40 PM

Testimony for HMS on 1/26/2018 2:45:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Kimberly Ferolino-Cantorna		Support	No

Comments:

To Whom It May Concern

This letter is to express our strong support for Senate Bill 2276. We ask that our senators and representatives do what is necessary to protect the health and safety of our most vulnerable children in Hawaii.

Youth in foster care are the most vulnerable to needing guidance throughout their lives, it is important for CWS to be properly staffed to be able to assist these youth, birth families and resource caregivers in a fashion that will allow for timely and quality support.

Please do what is necessary to help our CWS workers be supported in a way that will bring us closer to national standards for child welfare workers. Please help these CWS workers and their assistants to do their jobs in a caring and reasonable fashion, with support and regulation.

We look forward to continuing our collaborative work.

Sincerely,

Kimberly Ferolino-Cantorna

Judith Wilhoite
Kailua, Hawaii 96734

To: Senator Josh Green, Chair
Senator Stanley Chang, Vice Chair
COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES

Hearing: Friday, January 26, 2018
2:45PM
Conference Room 16

From: Judith Wilhoite

RE: SB 2276 Relating to Child Welfare Services

Aloha,

My name is Judith Wilhoite. My husband and I have been foster parents for over 20 years. I thank you for this opportunity to voice very strong support for SB2276.

Over the past two decades, I have seen firsthand the difference DHS social workers can make in the lives of Hawaii's families, thus creating a better community for all of us. Their work includes helping families heal and become stable enough to regain custody of their children. This is not a job for the faint hearted, as often both the birth parents and the foster children have suffered severe trauma in their lives, creating physical and psychological issues for all members of the family. It is imperative that these issues are addressed in a healing, thoughtful way, if we want to see this family become strong again.

At the same time, the case workers must support and respond to the needs of the resource caregivers currently taking care of the children, for children who have trauma in their past often present extremely challenging behaviors. A social worker getting needed support to the resource caregiver in a timely matter means the child is also getting what he or she needs to learn, heal, and be resilient.

If we want to see significant improvement of our child welfare system, we must provide the brave souls who embark on a career in child welfare with healthy, supportive working conditions. Giving workers a manageable case load would be a good place to start.

I thank you for hearing this bill and strongly support its passage.

SB-2276

Submitted on: 1/25/2018 10:33:26 PM

Testimony for HMS on 1/26/2018 2:45:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Stacey Jimenez		Support	No

Comments:

I am in strong support for Senate Bill 2276. Please do what is necessary to protect the health and safety of our most vulnerable children in Hawaii.

I respectfully request that you mandate a cap of 20 children per Child Welfare Services caseworker in East Hawaii for five years as a pilot project to demonstrate that lower caseloads results in better outcomes for our children, and less abuse and neglect.

Please do what is necessary to help our CWS workers be supported in a way that will bring us closer to national standards for child welfare workers. Help these CWS workers and their assistants to do their jobs in a caring and reasonable fashion, with support and regulation.



DATE: January 25, 2018

COMMITTEE ON HEALTH
Rep. John Mizuno, Chair
Rep. Bertrand Kobayashi, Vice Chair

FROM: Janet Grace, Executive Director – Hawaii Life Alliance

POSITION: Strong Support for SB2276 Relating to Child Welfare Services

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. My name is Janet Grace, the executive director for Hawaii Life Alliance which is comprised of organizations that believe life is of immeasurable worth from conception to natural death.

As an alliance, we believe that every human life is sacred and deserves protection. To this end we advocate for public policy that will create an environment that nurtures and protects the most vulnerable of our Islands keiki and youth.

We are encouraged by the hard work of Hawaii's Child Welfare Services caseworkers, especially those serving the largest population in East Hawaii, with the highest at-risk youth in foster care needing love and compassionate quality care.

Having adequately trained staff and mandating a cap of 20 children per caseworker can bring better outcomes and greater opportunity for a promising future for Hawaii's treasured keiki.

By coming together and supporting this 5-year pilot program we are letting these kids know we care, we will never give up on them, and their lives greatly matter.
Together – we can and will do great things for those who need us most!

Mahalo nui loa for the opportunity to testify.

Hawaii Life Alliance
(808) 225-4511

SB-2276

Submitted on: 1/26/2018 12:21:07 AM

Testimony for HMS on 1/26/2018 2:45:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Cheryl Toyofuku		Support	No

Comments:

SB-2276

Submitted on: 1/26/2018 8:20:49 AM

Testimony for HMS on 1/26/2018 2:45:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Kenneth Goodenow		Support	No

Comments:

Dear Chair Green and Committee Members:

I am very concerned about Child Welfare Services (“CWS”) in East Hawaii. My work as a lawyer has involved me in many Child Welfare cases, including service as Guardian ad Litem for numerous children. I have seen first hand many of the problems facing the overburdened CWS office in East Hawaii.

The Great Recession triggered deep cuts in Hawaii’s already overburdened Child Welfare system. Our concern today is the long-term impact of those cuts on the safety and well-being of our most vulnerable children. State budget cuts were particularly harmful to the child welfare system on Hawaii Island. Layoffs caused the four CWS units that formerly operated in East Hawaii to be collapsed into three units. The East Hawaii licensing division, which is responsible for inspecting and certifying safe foster homes for abused and neglected children, was cut from three workers to two. Today, licensing functions with just one worker, and caseworkers cope with impossible caseloads.

In all, the East Hawaii CWS has lost 19 of the 56 positions it had in 2009, and that reduction in staffing has caused an increase in average caseloads. The higher numbers of caseloads increase the potential for harm to children at risk for neglect or abuse. Caseloads in East Hawaii in October 2017 ranged as high as 55 children for one worker. Five workers had caseloads of more than 40 children. A crisis for a single child can easily consume a workday, and workers face extreme challenges as they attempt to track at-risk children and families; complete investigations and reports required by the department and the courts; arrange services for children and families; and respond to new cases.

Hawaii County in particular face some special challenges; Hawaii County had 418 children confirmed for abuse or neglect in 2015, for a rate of 213 confirmed abused or neglected children per 100,000 residents. Oahu had a rate of 76 abused kids per 100,000 population, while Maui had a rate of 158, and Kauai had a rate of 151 children per 100,000 residents. About one-third of the children in foster care in Hawaii live on Hawaii island.

There is precedent for capping workers’ caseloads. Legislatures in Texas, Indiana, Delaware and Florida have all required that state and local jurisdictions assess

workloads, meet standards, and implement specific strategies such as hiring additional staff. you for your time and service to our community.

My thanks to the chair and committe for hearing Senate Bill 2276.

Aloha,

Kenneth Goodenow

(808) 961-5155

January 26, 2018

**TO: Senator Josh Green Chair and Senator Stanley Chang Vice Chair
Human Services Committee**
RE: IN SUPPORT OF SB 2276
DATE: Friday, January 26, 2018
TIME: 2:45 p.m.
PLACE: CONFERENCE ROOM 016, STATE CAPITOL

Aloha,

My name is Wyman Barros and I am a student at the University of Hawaii-Manoa School of Social Work. I would like to testify in support of SB 2276. The purpose of this bill is to to cut down the amount of cases that Social Workers have at one time for Child Welfare Services

I support this bill for the following reasons:

Doing my practicum at CWS it is easy to see that the Social Workers that work for CWS have a heavy burden with a large amount of cases. I feel that if their case load was reduced to a maximum of twenty cases that it will decrease Social Work burnout and reduce the amount of Social Workers that leave after only a few years.

SB-2276

Submitted on: 1/26/2018 9:22:58 AM

Testimony for HMS on 1/26/2018 2:45:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Kaleb Glass		Support	No

Comments:

SB-2276

Submitted on: 1/26/2018 9:52:19 AM

Testimony for HMS on 1/26/2018 2:45:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
David G. Carvalho Sr		Support	No

Comments:

Re: Support for our child welfare system

To Whom It May Concern:

This letter is to express our strong support for Senate Bill 2276. We ask that our senators and representatives do what is necessary to protect the health and safety of our most vulnerable children in Hawaii.

We respectfully request that you mandate a cap of 20 children per Child Welfare Services caseworker in East Hawaii for five years as a pilot project to demonstrate that lower caseloads results in better outcomes for our children, and less abuse and neglect.

As youth in foster care are the most vulnerable to needing guidance throughout their lives, it is important for CWS to be properly staffed to be able to assist these youth, birth families and resource caregivers in a fashion that will allow for timely and quality support.

Please do what is necessary to help our CWS workers be supported in a way that will bring us closer to national standards for child welfare workers. Please help these CWS workers and their assistants to do their jobs in a caring and reasonable fashion, with support and regulation.

We look forward to continuing our collaborative work.

Best wishes!

Sincerely,

David G. Carvalho Sr.

SB-2276

Submitted on: 1/26/2018 9:57:31 AM

Testimony for HMS on 1/26/2018 2:45:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Chris Jimenez	Calvary Chapel Pearl Harbor	Support	No

Comments:

SB-2276

Submitted on: 1/26/2018 10:51:34 AM

Testimony for HMS on 1/26/2018 2:45:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
April Lum		Support	No

Comments:

April Lum

434 Kunehi St. #1003

Kapolei, HI 96707

January 26, 2018

To Whom It May Concern,

My name is April Lum and I have been a resource caregiver (formerly called foster parent) for the last 8 years. This letter is to express my strong support for Senate Bill 2276.

I respectfully request that you mandate a cap of 20 children per Child Welfare Services caseworker in East Hawaii for five years as a pilot project to demonstrate that lower caseloads results in better outcomes for our children, and less abuse and neglect.

I have seen firsthand the negative impact that entering the foster care system can have on a child. They can feel a great loss when they are separated from their parents, who they still love despite the abuse or neglect they have experienced, as well as the possible loss from separation with their siblings, extended family, and their community. They also experience this loss every time they must move from placement to placement and the loss they experience when social workers, who are overburdened with too many cases leave because they are burnt out.

As youth in foster care are the most vulnerable to needing guidance throughout their lives, it is important for CWS to be properly staffed to be able to assist these youth, birth families and resource caregivers in a fashion that will allow for timely and quality support.

Please do what is necessary to help our CWS workers be supported in a way that will bring us closer to national standards for child welfare workers. Please help these CWS

workers and their assistants to do their jobs in a caring and reasonable fashion, with support and regulation.

Mahalo for your consideration,

April Lum